Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2009: A New Dataset*

JONATHAN M. POWELL
jonathan.powell@uky.edu

CLAYTON L. THYNE
clayton.thyne@uky.edu

University of Kentucky
Department of Political Science
1615 Patterson Office Tower
Lexington, KY 40506
(859) 257-6958

Once considered a 'hot topic' among scholars, research on coups d'état has waned in recent years. This decline is surprising given that 5 coups have happened since January 2008, bringing the last decade's total to over three dozen. One explanation for the lack of coup research is the absence of a temporally and spatially comprehensive dataset to test theories. Also absent is a discussion of what makes coups distinct from other forms of anti-regime activity. This article seeks to remedy these problems. We present a new dataset on coups from 1950 to 2009. We begin by explaining our theoretical definition and coding procedures. Next, we examine general trends in the data across time and space. We conclude by explaining why scholars studying a variety of topics, including civil wars, regime stability, and democratization, would benefit by paying closer attention to coups.

Keywords: coup d'état, new dataset, coding procedures, civil wars

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While research on violent forms of anti-regime activity has flourished in recent years, the volume of cross-national research on coups is relatively thin. Early efforts to understand coups most often focused on specific regions, Latin America and Africa in particular, while recent studies have taken a more general approach.[1] Work from O'Kane (1987) and Londregan and Poole (1990) were among the first to use global coup data, and subsequent cross-national research offers more general theory and comprehensive empirical tests (e.g., Alesina et al. 1996; Galetovic and Sanhueza 2000; Belkin and Schofer 2005). While this body of work provides a useful starting point to understand the causes and effects of coups, there has been surprisingly little discussion as to what a coup actually is. We also continue to lack a basic understanding of how coups might have a broad impact on a range of topics. The recent coups in Thailand and Mauritania, for example, suggest that coups can quickly derail the process of democratic consolidation. Coups also seem to be linked with civil wars, including the 1975 coup that sparked 25 years of violence in the Bangladesh.

While these examples suggest that coups are relevant for many areas of study, several barriers inhibit our ability to evaluate these questions empirically. The most obvious barriers are the lack of a definition for a coup that has been widely discussed and accepted by scholars and a discussion of what differentiates coups from other forms of anti-regime activity. The purpose of this paper is to overcome these barriers.

A WORKING DEFINITION

Welch (1970:1) has claimed that 'a coup d'état is a sharp, clear event, easy to date and (if successful) possible to document.' Subsequent research suggests that Welch was perhaps too optimistic. While some agreement at the conceptual level has emerged, a critical examination of

how scholars have operationalized coups reveals several topics deserving of further conversation. We begin by summarizing how fourteen studies capture coups in Table I, and then walk through common trends and ambiguities. Our goal is to arrive at a final definition that best captures coups as distinct from other political phenomena.

[Table-I]

Targets

The first factor in arriving at a definition is in deciding *who* may be targeted. We find little debate on this subject, with most scholars focusing on the state's primary leader. We remain consistent with previous research by considering only attempts to overthrow the *chief executive*. This rule separates coups from less extreme mechanisms of pressuring the leadership. For example, a handful of Nepalese police recently revolted against its officers over inferior food rations. This event is best described as a mutiny because Prime Minister Koirala was never directly challenged. Likewise, military pressure forced the resignation of Argentine President Frondizi's cabinet in 1959. However, this event does not merit classification as a coup because the chief executive remained in office.

Perpetrators

A starting point for many studies, Finer (1988:23) limits perpetrators to 'the armed forces.' This rather narrow focus is echoed by six other sources in Table I. Others more broadly allow non-military elites, civilian groups, and even mercenaries to be included as coup perpetrators. This broad definition includes four sources, including Janowitz (1977: 49), who claims that perpetrators need only be 'organized factions.' We take a middle ground. Coups may be undertaken by *any elite who is part of the state apparatus*. These can include non-civilian members of the military and security services or civilian members of government.

This approach has three primary advantages. First, it avoids conflating coups with other forms of anti-regime activity, which is the primary problem with broader approaches. Taylor and Jodice (1983), for instance, claim that 'irregular executive transfers' can be perpetrated by 'groups, cliques, cabals, parties or factions either outside or inside a government, and its agencies…rebellious minorities…the military, or conspirators backed by foreign powers.' This risks conflating a number of anti-regime actions that are distinct from coups.[2] For example, civil wars commonly include vast segments of the general population that need not have any ties to the government (e.g., Small and Singer 1982:210), while 'revolutions' or 'popular movements' could also be classified as coups under broader definitions (Goodwin 2001:9). Though many features of coups are present in civil wars and revolutions, the latters' execution by the masses requires their distinct classification.[3]

Second, allowing non-military elites to perpetrate coups is necessary because the initial instigation of a coup attempt frequently involves civilian members of the government alone, with the military playing a later role in deciding whether the putsch will be successful. Focusing exclusively on the military would likely bias our dataset towards selecting only successful coup attempts. For example, the 1962 coup attempt led by Senegalese Prime Minister Mamadou Dia failed because he was unable to gain support throughout the military. While this is clearly a coup attempt, the case would not have met the more stringent military-only definitions.

Third, the requirement that coup perpetrators come from within the state differentiates coups from executive changes brought about by international force. While coups can be backed by foreign powers, they are only included if foreigners acted in a supporting role. For example, the 1953 Iranian coup was unlikely to have occurred without CIA influence, but it was ultimately Iranian actors who overthrew Mosaddeq. In contrast, the fall of Idi Amin at the hands of the

Tanzanian military in 1979 does not constitute a coup because foreign powers were the primary actors.

Tactics

Two factors must be considered in regard to the tactics used to overthrow the chief executive. First, the activity must be *illegal*. This differs from Finer's (1988:3) early definition of a coup, which is interested more generally in the military's 'intervention' into civilian affairs. Others are consistent with our criterion, including McGowan's (2003) claim that coups must be 'illegally' undertaken. The illegal distinction is important because it differentiates coups from political pressure, which is common whenever people have freedom to organize. Massive protests in Thailand prompted General Anupong to 'bluntly advise' Thai Prime Minister Somchai to step down in 2008, for example. This attempt to influence politics was perfectly legal, and therefore does not constitute a coup.

Second, a near-universal criterion for coups is that violence does not have to be present. Finer (1988:23) includes events in which 'no blood has been shed,' while others have used the 'threat of' force or violence in addition to its overt use as a criterion. We remain consistent with this distinction in providing *no minimal death* criterion for an event to be considered a coup. This rule avoids conflating coups with civil wars. While many coup attempts have sparked civil wars, most are bloodless.

Plots and Rumors

Welch's contention that coups are 'clear events, easy to date' and 'possible to document' included a qualifier—he was speaking only of successful coups. Changes in a state's chief executive are easy to spot. It becomes increasingly difficult to identify more ambiguous forms of coup activity, such as coup failures, plots, and rumors. We begin by eliminating the least reliable

events: coup plots and rumors. We exclude these events for two reasons. First, they are often too mundane to be picked up by large media sources, which make them difficult to reliably code. Second, governments often have an incentive to fabricate or overstate coup plots and rumors to justify repression. Kebschull (1994:568), for example, noted that plots could be '…deliberately contrived nonsense, put forward to serve the regime's purpose of initiating emergency rule, suppressing a particular group, or justifying other actions sought by the regime.' Given the difficulties in attempting to verify whether claims regarding plots or rumors are legitimate, we opt to follow Finer's (1988:307) criteria in coding only cases where coup attempts were 'overt' (there has been a visible movement to claim power) and 'actual' (the events are not alleged *ex post facto* in some kind of trial proceeding).

To summarize, our definition of a coup attempt includes *illegal and overt attempts by the military or other elites within the state apparatus to unseat the sitting executive*. This final definition coincides most closely with O'Kane (1987) and Marshall and Marshall (2007), who both code the world across a large time span. Others provide broader definitions, particularly for tactics. As we will see, we use this breadth to our advantage in creating our dataset.

Success and Failure

We now differentiate between failed and successful efforts. Many coup attempts are quickly put down by the government, making them easy to code as failures. Others are much more ambiguous. Leaders of the 1991 Soviet coup attempt managed to depose President Gorbachev for three days, but it would be difficult to call this a successful attempt overall. Many scholars have followed Thompson (1973) in considering a coup to be successful if the 'post-coup ruling arrangement' remains in place for at least a week (e.g., Jackman 1978; McGowan 2003).

Our definition remains consistent with this one-week threshold. A coup attempt is thus defined as successful if the perpetrators *seize and hold power for at least seven days*.

While almost all scholars listed in Table I differentiate success and failure in a similar manner, the one-week threshold is somewhat arbitrary. A theoretically stronger approach would be to follow O'Kane (1987:37-38), who considers a coup to be successful if it leads to the 'installation in power of a government of the conspirators' own choosing.' This definition is problematic because it assumes the plotters ultimately seek power, when they may merely be attempting to change the political system or leadership. The 2005 coup in Mauritania, for example, led to elections in which coup leaders banned members of the military from running for office. While the military was instrumental in the demise of the Taya regime, it did not install a government of its own choosing. It is difficult to classify success in this manner without knowing the exact motivation of the conspirators—something that is almost impossible to evaluate because coup leaders almost inevitably couch their goals in terms of democracy promotion and freedom. Thus, we opt to use a more empirically-verifiable temporal requirement.

CODING PROCEDURES

We draw on the fourteen datasets listed in Table I as a starting point to build a 'candidate' dataset. Three of these datasets are limited geographically, while four others end prior to 1980. These limitations constrict our ability to understand coups across the globe and in different time periods. All others are quite remarkable in both their spatial and temporal coverage. However, the differences in the coding criteria would make it problematic to simply merge the information and consider all observations as similar phenomena. More importantly, a detailed examination

of many events within each dataset reveals peculiarities deserving of more careful consideration. Coups are at times conflated with civil wars, mutinies, and assassination attempts, for example. The datasets also often lack specific dates for coup events, which limits the precision of analyses. Several authors also code only successful coups, which limits our ability to analyze the factors that might cause a coup to fail once attempted.

Given these considerations, our coding procedures followed two main steps. First, we merged the information from the fourteen sources into a single dataset. This resulted in 2141 potential coup events from 1950 to 2006. Many events were missing information on the month or day of the coup attempt. We were able to merge 882 of these events with sources that included this information. We then searched through dozens of sources for information about each of the remaining 1259 alleged coups.[5] Two or more sources agreed on the exact date and outcome of 377 coup events, which made it quite easy to verify the event with historical documents. Among the remaining 882 questionable events, we were able to verify 73 as coded correctly. Our search through the historical accounts of the remaining 809 alleged coup attempts revealed several common discrepancies.

We summarize the coding discrepancies (false positives) in Table II. The first column shows the entire sample, while the latter fourteen columns examine discrepancies among our source datasets.[6] We begin by noting the fairly high level of accuracy across all sources (row 3, ranging from 67.7% to 88.3%). While many discrepancies emerge, these aggregate scores give us confidence that these datasets are providing an excellent set of potential coups to begin building our dataset.

[Table-II]

Focusing on the first column, we see that the most common coding discrepancy came from our inability to verify that the coded events happened (n=171). A handful of these events appeared to come from the scholars inputting the data incorrectly (miscoding countries or years). Others are likely due to the authors relying on their specialized knowledge of foreign countries or languages to find sources outside of our reach. Luttwak, for instance, likely relied on his extensive foreign policy experience when coding coup attempts, which could explain why 26.3% of his false positives fall in this category. We return to this category in analyzing potential biases in our final dataset.

Several authors also code coup attempts when there were no overt challenges to the executive's authority (n=167). Events in this category were dominated by coup plots and rumors. The Haitian government foiled an alleged coup plot in October 2000, for example, arresting eight senior police officers. However, given that there was no actual attempt to take over the government, it is unclear whether the alleged plot would have ever been attempted. While our earlier discussion justifies their exclusion from our dataset, we see that their inclusion by several authors yields high instances of false positives.

The next most common discrepancy comes from conflating insurgent fighting with coup attempts (n=153). Rebel leaders urged the military to defect when the FMLN launched its first major military offensive against the Salvadorian government in 1981, for example. This event should not be considered a coup because no sector of the government aided the insurgency. This and similar events explain the bulk of false positives in Moreno et al.'s dataset, for example, and represent a high percentage among several other sources. Similar discrepancies come from conflating popular protests with coup attempts (n=43). Thousands of students protested and rioted against the ruling South Korean government prior to Rhee's election campaign in March

1960, for example. Though these efforts eventually led to his resignation, there was no attempt from within the government to seize power.

The next most common category, unclear, comes from our inability to match coup events with other potential coups within the same country/year (n=139). This happened when the sources failed to include the day and/or month in their datasets when the state had multiple coup attempts in the same year. This made it impossible to know to which coup event the author was referring. For example, Banks codes one successful coup in the Dominican Republic in 1961 without reporting the month or day. Other sources code coups on three different specific dates in the same year. This made it impossible to match Bank's event with any of the other three events reported. The failure to report the month and/or day makes up the bulk of the false positives in four other datasets.

Many potential coups also fail to meet our definition because they do not challenge the chief executive's position (n=46). Military leaders purged much of the South Vietnamese government in December 1964, for example, dissolving the High National Council, the provisional legislature, and arresting political leaders. They did not, however, attempt to remove President Phan Khac Suu from power.

Many events also fail to meet our 'illegal' criterion (n=45). For example, in 1962 Premier Khaled el-Azm came into power with a vote of confidence from the Syrian Assembly after Premier Bashir al-Azmeh announced his cabinet's resignation. He quickly dissolved Parliament and began a rule by decree. Though these moves certainly increased his power, el-Azm's moves were within the rules of the constitution. After coming to power, his attempt to seize extraconstitutional control likewise does not meet our definition of a coup because the efforts came from the leader himself. We eliminated 52 similar events, which are commonly

referred to as *autogolpes* (self-coups). We see generally low values for each of these categories among our sources. Janowitz is an exception. His false positives can be attributed to his rather broad definition of coups, which would allow for inclusion of both legal interventions and *autogolpes*.

The final two discrepancies include assassination attempts (n=25) and external efforts by foreign governments or mercenaries (n=18). Coup attempts frequently include efforts to kill the executive, such as the assassination of Faisal II of Iraq in 1958. Such killings are rightly considered to be coup attempts when the assassin comes from a conspiracy within the state apparatus. However, assassination attempts are excluded when they come from outside the government, such as the assassination of Rwandan President Habyarimana in 1994. While there are few false positives for external invasions, we see handful of higher values for assassination attempts, including 17.8% of McGowan's false positives. These discrepancies come from our judgment about the purpose of the assassination attempt and the people involved. We exclude attempts if there is no evidence of (1) an attempt to take over the government and (2) a larger conspiracy. McGowan is less constrictive in his coding decisions.

Our final step was to comb through all instances where coups were mentioned in major media sources from 1950 to 2009, adding these events to our data to provide the most current list possible. Given the exhaustive coverage in our candidate dataset, only seven completely new cases were coded: Seychelles (1977), Russia (1991), Fiji (2000), Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania (2008), Madagascar and Honduras (2009). Our final dataset yields 454 coup attempts from 1950 to 2009, of which 225 (49.6%) were successful and 229 (50.4%) were unsuccessful.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Coup attempts happened in 94 states during our time period. Figure 1 presents the instances of coups by state, revealing that while coups seem to be clustered, few areas have been immune. Coups have been most common in Africa and the Americas (36.5% and 31.9%, respectively). Asia and the Middle East have experienced 13.1% and 15.8% of total global coups, respectively. Europe has experienced by far the fewest number of coup attempts: 2.6%.

[Figure-1]

We also see some interesting trends in the frequency of coup attempts over time. As shown in Figure 2, there is a fairly clear decline in the total frequency of coup attempts over time.[7] The high point for coup attempts came in the mid-1960s, followed by two more bubbles in the mid-1970s and the early 1990s. The number of successful coups has likewise decreased over time. We saw twelve successful coups in both 1963 and 1966. The mid- to late-1970s also saw a brief burst of successful coups (ranging from 3 to 9 for each year). An interesting trend emerges when we look at the percentage of coup attempts that resulted in successful regime changes, which we plot on the right side of the Y-axis. The mean success rate is 48% during the entire time span. This rate saw early peaks around 1970 and 1980, and then a decline until the turn of the century. However, we see another spike in the success rate starting in 2003. Ten of the fifteen (67%) coup attempts since then have been successful, and only one of the most recent four coup attempts have failed. While coups have certainly waned over time, the recent success of coup plotters suggests that coups remain a key element of governmental instability.

[Figure-2]

PITFALLS

A few words of caution are needed. First, our observations are rarely original in the sense that they have not been previously coded. This is unsurprising given that we compared the historical record to fourteen earlier scholarly sources on coups. Our effort's utility is not solely reflected by the discovery of new cases. Rather, it is in verifying that coded events coincide with an acceptable and consistent definition. In doing so, we have excluded a variety of events that might be of interest to scholars. Those seeking to study other forms of uncommon power transfers would benefit from utilizing data that are built to specifically address those types of events. Scholars seeking to explain 'irregular' power transfers in general, for example, should find the Archigos (Goemans, Gleditsch and Chiozza 2009) or *World Handbook* (Taylor and Jodice 1983) datasets particularly useful. Banks (2001) provides data for popular protests and riots, while Gleditsch et al. (2002) captures more violent rebellions. External invasions can be captured with the MID dataset (Jones, Bremer and Singer 1996), and the Polity IV (Marshall and Jaggers 2000) dataset captures seizures of power made by the executives themselves.

Second, despite considerable efforts to verify coups and coup attempts, reporting bias could have limited our ability to identify events. This is particularly true for coup attempts in states with a small Western media presence and events that happened in the earliest time period under investigation. One way to analyze these potential biases is to examine instances where scholars identified coups within the original candidate datasets for which we could find no evidence (see Table II, row 4). This is useful because the original sources likely had access to a variety of non-English sources, older documents, or first-hand knowledge of the events they coded. Biases can be identified by analyzing whether the non-verifiable cases vary systematically by region or time.

As shown in Figure 3, the breakdown by region shows some evidence of bias, with the highest values in regions that are least apt to be covered by Western media sources. However, a crosstabulation between region and percent 'no evidence' is statistically insignificant (χ^2=4.27, p<.370), which gives us confidence that our reliance on Western media sources is not providing systematic bias in our dataset. The temporal breakdown similarly shows little evidence of bias. As one would expect, there are few unverifiable cases in the 2000s, but the next smallest category is the oldest in our dataset: 1950s. The correlation coefficient between 'no evidence' and year is also insignificant (r=-0.15, p<.250), again suggesting little temporal bias in source coverage.

[Figure-3]

A third potential pitfall lies not in our dataset, but in ways in which scholars are likely to use our dataset. Coup attempts are frequently lumped in with more aggregate measures of anti-regime activity, such as Bank's (2001) annual count of riots, protests, etc., and Uppsala/PRIO's armed conflict dataset (Gleditsch et al. 2002), particularly if deaths exceed the 25 battle death threshold. Scholars building empirical models should be aware of potential cross-coding of the same events in order to avoid collinearity or endogeneity. While we have gone to great lengths to assure that coups are not conflated with other forms of anti-regime activity in our dataset, there is no guarantee that scholars coding other events have excluded coups in theirs. For example, we have identified 38 events within the Uppsala/PRIO dataset and 4 events in the Correlates of War (Sarkees 2000) internal conflict dataset that are best described as coups. Scholars who use these datasets to operationalize civil wars should be wary of including these events.[8]

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to provide a sound theoretical operationalization of coups and to introduce the newest, most comprehensive dataset on coups to date. We conclude here by suggesting two broad areas of research that might find these data useful. The burgeoning civil war literature is one fruitful avenue. Scholars studying civil war onset might be interested in the impact of coups, perhaps expecting them to spark civil conflicts by weakening the state, as they seemed to in Afghanistan (1978) and Nepal (1960). Coups might also have an interesting impact for studies of civil war duration and outcome. They might lengthen civil conflicts by instigating further governmental instability, as evidenced by the 1989 coup in Sudan. They might alternatively shorten civil conflicts by bringing more conciliatory leaders to power. Pinilla's ouster of Colombian dictator Gómez in 1953, for example, led to civil peace and a power-sharing agreement between liberal and conservative parties. Methodologically, scholars studying this topic should consider either excluding or controlling for coups in their empirical models.

Coups should also be of interest to those studying democracy. Coups are likely to derail the process of democratization and/or democratic consolidation, as they seem to have recently in Thailand and Mauritania. They might have the opposite effect by removing long-standing authoritarian leaders from power. Recent rumblings by the military in Zimbabwe, for example, suggest that President Mugabe's long-awaited exit is likely to be the result of a coup. Each of these possibilities is immediately relevant to policy-makers, particularly given the well-documented efforts to foment coups in foreign states in the past. US efforts against Chávez in Venezuela (2005) and Hussein in Iraq (1991), for example, were based on the view that coups were the most peaceful and direct ways to bring about positive regime changes (Thyne 2010). Policy-makers would likely be similarly interested in knowing which of their favored leaders

have a high likelihood of being overthrown in a coup, which could be forecasted with our data. We hope that the dataset previewed in this paper will provide the tools necessary to tackle such interesting research questions.

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JONATHAN M. POWELL, b. 1982, Ph.D. student in Political Science, University of Kentucky (2006-). Research interests include conflict processes, regime transitions, and civil-military relations.

CLAYTON L. THYNE, b. 1978, Ph.D. in Political Science (University of Iowa, 2007). Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Kentucky (2007-). Research interests include domestic conflict/instability, regime types, and international education policy. Most recent book: *How International Relations Affect Civil Conflict: Cheap Signals, Costly Consequences* (Lexington Books, 2009).

Table I. Coverage and Definitions of Coups in Previous Research

Source	Years covered	States coded	Target	Perpetrator	Tactics
Banks (2001:13-14)	1946-1999	190	'top government elite…nation's power structure'	undefined, includes revolutions	'forced changes'
Belkin & Schofer (2005:144)	1945-2000	167	'regime'	'small military coalitions'	undefined
Ferguson (1987:13-14)	1945-1986	164	'government', 'establishment'	Soldiers, Politicians, Mercenaries	undefined
Finer (1988:23)	1958-1974	144	'civilian authorities'	'armed forces'	'sanction (or threat of)'
Janowitz (1977:49)	1946-1975	151	'existing regime'	'organized factions'	undefined
Kennedy (1974:14)	1945-1972	142	undefined	'regular armed troops'	'use' or 'threat of use' of armed forces
Lunde (1991:18)	1955-1984	47	'regime'	'military or security forces'	undefined
Luttwak (1969:12)	1945-1967	132	'government'	'segment of the state apparatus'	'conspiracy'
Marshall & Marshall (2007:1)	1960-2006	199	'executive authority and office'	'ruling or political elites'	'forceful seizure'
McGowan (2007:2)	1958-2004	52	'national government'	'military, security, and/or police'	'violence…may be negligible'
Moreno et al (2003:2)	1950-2000	19	'national government'	military leader; executive him/herself	'military force (or threat of)'
O'Kane (1987:22,37)	1950-1985	163	'government'	civil or military	'threat or use of violence'
Taylor & Jodice (1983)	1948-1982	102	'chief executive'	'groups, cliques, cabals, parties and factions'	'threatened or actual coercion'
Thompson (1973:6,52)	1946-1970	135	'chief executive'	'regular armed forces'	'use or threat of force'

Table II. Data Summary and Coding Discrepancies

	Whole sample	Banks	Belkin & Schofer	Ferguson	Finer	Janowitz	Kennedy	Lunde	Luttwak	Marshall & Marshall	McGowan	Moreno et al	O'Kane	Taylor & Jodice	Thompson
Data summary:															
No. Events coded	1259	231	362	295	129	110	263	97	84	434	199	218	134	584	215
No. false positives	811	88	141	116	51	18	126	19	20	124	45	107	42	276	45
(percent of N)	(64.5)	(38.1)	(39.0)	(39.3)	(39.5)	(16.4)	(47.9)	(19.6)	(23.8)	(28.6)	(22.6)	(49.1)	(31.3)	(47.3)	(20.9)
Accuracy*	35.7	71.0	71.8	73.1	74.0	77.5	68.0	79.7	78.2	79.8	83.9	67.7	73.2	73.0	88.3
Distribution of 'false positives' by error category (percentages):															
No evidence of anti-regime activity	21.1	2.3	9.3	13.9	0.0	44.4	22.4	21.1	26.3	21.0	15.6	25.7	11.9	14.2	6.7
No overt attempt to seize control	20.6	5.8	13.6	13.0	3.9	5.6	30.4	26.3	10.5	29.8	26.7	6.7	0.0	27.4	13.3
Rebel or insurgent fighting	18.9	16.3	9.3	7.0	3.9	0.0	12.8	26.3	21.1	16.1	13.3	42.9	2.4	21.5	33.3
Unclear	11.0	59.3	52.9	53.9	78.4	5.6	4.8	0.0	21.1	0.0	0.0	1.0	81.0	0.7	0.0
Seizure of power by chief executive	6.4	1.2	2.1	1.7	0.0	16.7	6.4	5.3	5.3	9.7	11.1	11.4	0.0	9.1	6.7
Challenge not against executive	5.7	0.0	1.4	1.7	3.9	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	4.8	6.7	2.9	0.0	8.8	15.6
Legal attempt to remove executive	5.6	7.0	5.0	3.5	5.9	22.2	4.8	5.3	5.3	5.7	0.0	2.9	4.8	5.8	15.6
Popular protests	5.3	4.7	4.3	2.6	3.9	5.6	9.6	5.3	0.0	7.3	2.2	4.8	0.0	4.0	6.7
Assassination attempts	3.1	1.2	1.4	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.4	10.5	10.5	1.6	17.8	0.0	0.0	5.5	0.0
Efforts by foreign govs/mercenaries	2.2	2.3	0.7	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	4.0	6.7	1.9	0.0	2.9	2.2

*Accuracy = (true positives+true negatives)/(true positives+true negatives+false positives+false negatives)

Figure 1. Instances of Coup Attempts, 1950 to 2009

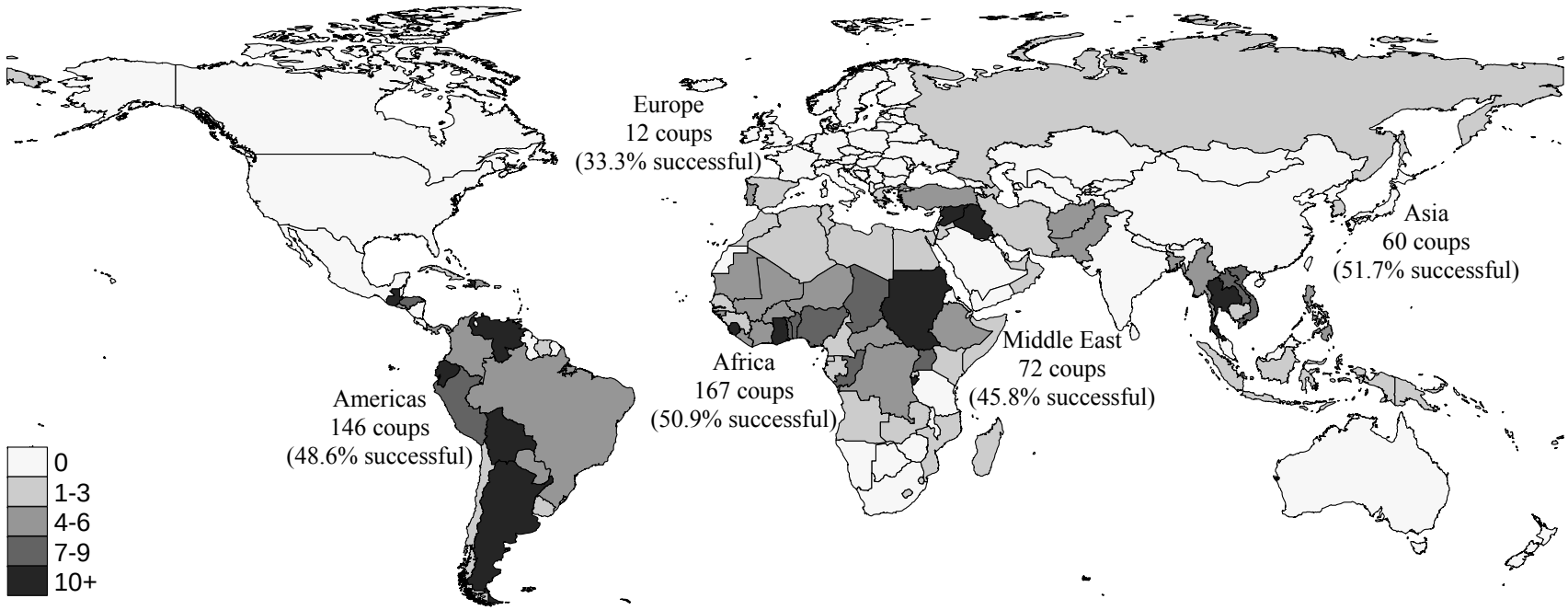


Figure 2. Coup Trends over Time

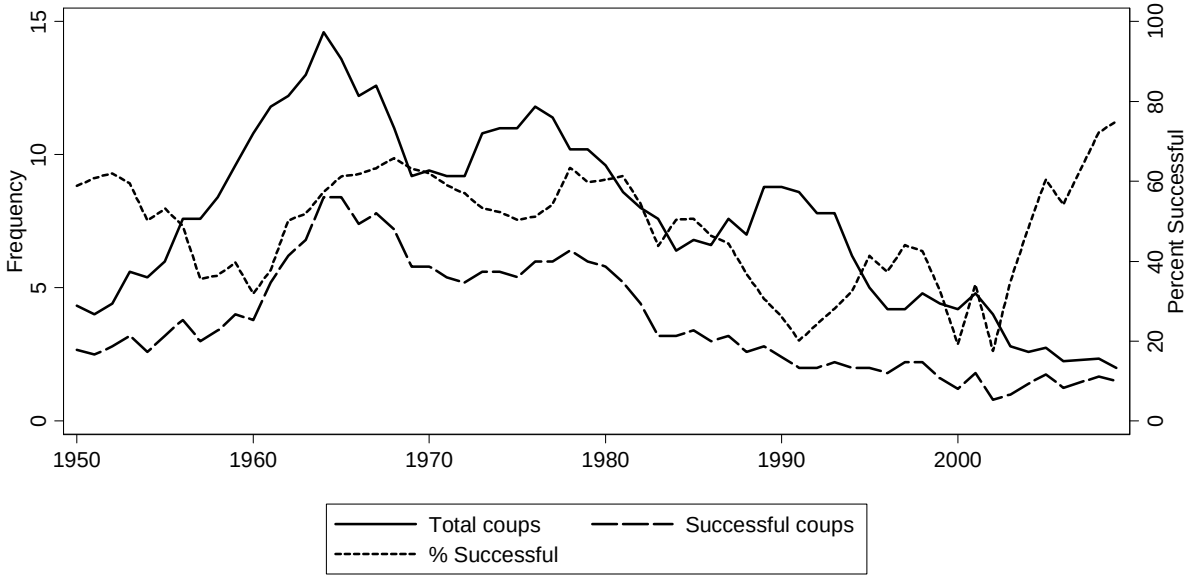
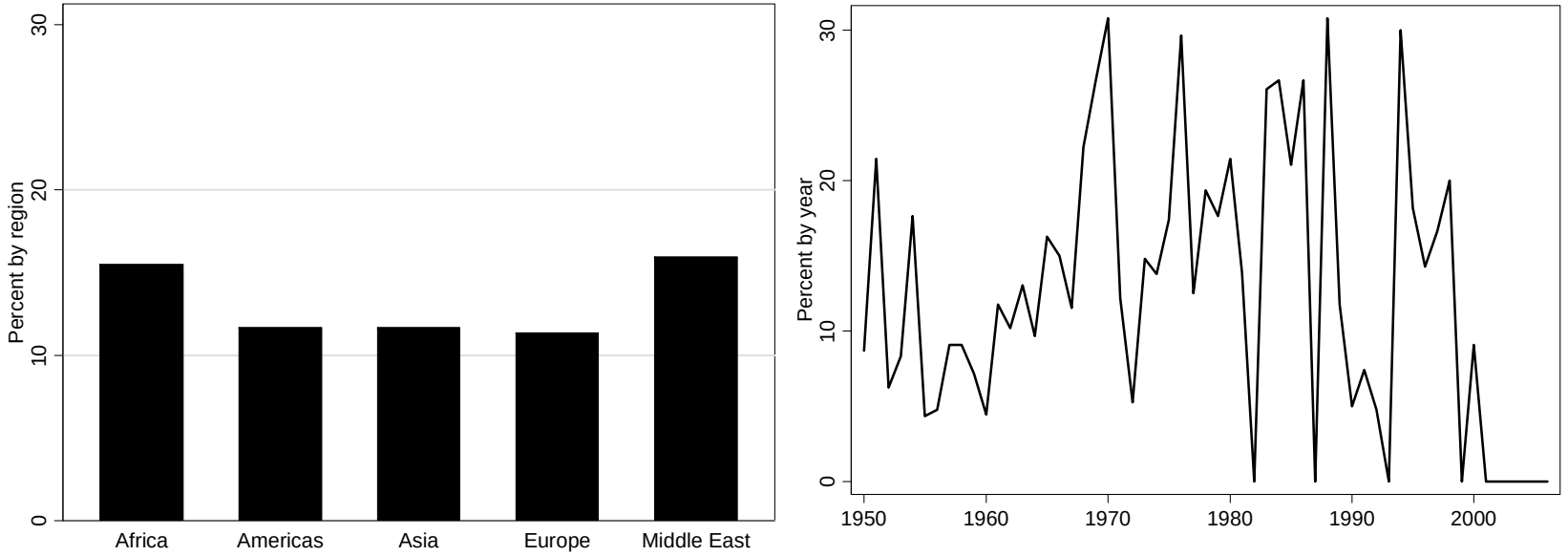


Figure 3. Coup Events Coded as 'No Evidence'



Note: Y axes $= \dfrac{\text{frequency of events coded as 'no evidence' within each region or year}}{\text{total events coded within each region or year}}$

NOTES

[1] For work on specific regions, see Fossum (1967), Dix (1994), Jackman (1978), Kposowa and Jenkins (1993), Lunde (1991), McGowan (2003), Agyeman-Duah (1990), and Decalo (1990).

[2] Taylor and Jodice (1983) note that their measure does not coincide with the classical definition of a coup. However, their measure has been utilized in testing coup theories on multiple occasions (e.g., Londregan and Poole 1990; Galetovic and Sanhueza 2001).

[3] Previous scholars have paid close attention to this distinction to differentiate coups from civil wars. Morrison and Stevenson (1972:128) required coups to be undertaken "without overt mass participation," a qualifier later incorporated by Jackman (1978), Ferguson (1987:13), McGowan (2003) and Marshall and Marshall (2007:1).

[5] The most common sources we used were *The Historical New York Times*, *Keesings*, and *Lexis-Nexis*. The latter source was particularly useful in giving us access to foreign media. Common international news outlets included *Agence-France Presse, Deutsche Presse Agentur, Xinhua,* and the *BBC*. In the dataset we have given preference to citing the *New York Times* as a default due to its accessibility (77% of sources listed come from the *New York Times*). Exceptions include alternative sources that better illustrate the event's applicability to our definition. The full list is available online in our candidate dataset.

[6] We should be clear that these events are only "false" or "errors" in the sense that they do not coincide with our definition of coups. Most of the excluded events fit perfectly well with the original author's intentions.

[7] The data in Figure 2 are displayed as a 5-year moving average.

[8] A list of these cases can be found in our online appendix.